

Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

No Re-Certification Without Practice Improvement

While payers talk about rewarding physicians for outcomes, the **American Board of Internal Medicine** is taking a concrete step forward.

Starting next January, for the first time doctors of internal medicine seeking to maintain their board certifications will be evaluated on practice performance as well as on medical knowledge, ABIM announced earlier this month.

Beginning over a decade ago, ABIM made a re-certification process mandatory for physicians to continue to identify themselves as board-certified. Some other specialties, such as family medicine, have had re-certification requirements for much longer.

Also effective in January, physicians who are in the midst of the internists' ten-year cycle will be required to complete a self evaluation and practice-improvement project on some aspect of their clinical care as part of the re-ecertification process. Internists must complete the process to call themselves board-certified.

Under the program, physicians will analyze patient data to choose a target for improvement, change their practices to accomplish the improvement goal, and then measure results and report them to ABIM. To help physicians focus their self-evaluations on evidence-based practice in high-need areas, ABIM offers modules on preventive services, diabetes, preventive cardiology, asthma, hypertension, and care of the vulnerable elderly.